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UNCLAS QUITO 000364

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [PREL](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: ECUADOR FAVORING INSULZA, EMBASSY PROMOTING FLORES

REF: A. SECSTATE 25152

[B](#). QUITO 280

[C](#). QUITO 121

[1](#)1. The Ambassador and El Salvador's envoy to Ecuador, Rafael Alfaro, approached GoE FM Patricio Zuquilanda February 2 to promote Fernando Flores's OAS SYG candidacy (Ref B details Flores-specific portions of the Ambassador's most-recent call on Ecuadorian President Gutierrez). Employing points similar to those of Ref A, they praised the Salvadoran ex-president's qualifications, track record, and exuberance. Zuquilanda listened politely but offered no substantive response.

[1](#)2. In order to measure support for competing OAS SYG candidates and thus help us to fine-tune our lobbying, the Ambassador later called on Chilean Ambassador to Ecuador Nelson Haddad. Haddad claimed he liked the chances of Chile's candidate, GoC Interior Minister Ricardo Insulza. He clammed up when pressed for an explanation, however. The Ambassador will meet with the Mexican envoy February 16 to gauge backing for GoM candidate FM Luis Derbez.

[1](#)3. Insulza visited Quito February 10 in search of Ecuador's vote, calling on both Gutierrez and Zuquilanda and meeting extensively with the press. In public remarks, the Chilean extolled the close bilateral relations Ecuador and Chile had long maintained and his desires to see them strengthened. Local media coverage was favorable, although neither Gutierrez nor Zuquilanda publicly proclaimed support for the Chilean minister's candidacy. In Panama February 11, Insulza reportedly claimed that Gutierrez privately had promised him Ecuador's OAS vote.

[1](#)4. COMMENT: Although Ecuador appears in Chile's camp, our pro-Flores campaign continues. The Ambassador will engage other Central American COMs at a February 16 meeting, seeking consensus isthmus support for the Salvadoran SYG candidate. A week later, Flores travels to Quito on his own self-promotion tour. Ambassador Alfaro has invited us to participate in events honoring his ex-president, which we expect will draw high-level GoE attendance and allow us another chance to sing Flores's praises.
Kenney